

Atriplex canescens / Muhlenbergia porteri Shrubland

COMMON NAME	Four-wing saltbush/Bush muhly Shrubland
SYNONYM	1152.17 in Reichenbacher, 1983.
TNC SYSTEM	Terrestrial
PHYSIOGNOMIC CLASS	Shrubland
PHYSIOGNOMIC SUBCLASS	Evergreen shrubland
PHYSIOGNOMIC GROUP	Extremely xeromorphic shrubland
FORMATION	Extremely xeromorphic facultatively deciduous subdesert shrubland
ALLIANCE	<i>Atriplex canescens</i> Shrubland Alliance

CLASSIFICATION CONFIDENCE LEVEL 3

RANGE

Undescribed type and distribution unknown.

On the Monument, this association is concentrated on the slopes surrounding the ruins and best developed on the southwest facing slope.

ENVIRONMENTAL DESCRIPTION

Tuzigoot National Monument

This association appears on exposures of alkaline, well-drained, sandy loam soils.

USFWS WETLAND SYSTEM Not applicable.

MOST ABUNDANT SPECIES

Globally

Information not available.

*Tuzigoot National Monument*Strata

Shrub

Species*Atriplex canescens*, *Prosopis velutina*, *Gutierrezia sarothrae*, *Parthenium incanum*, *Eurotia lanata*, *Ephedra viridis*

Herbaceous

Muhlenbergia porteri, *Aristida purpurea*, *Bouteloua barbata*, *Bromus rubens*, *Allionia incarnata*, *Setaria viridis*, *Sporobolus crypethanthus*, *Cassia bauhinoides*, *Sphaeralcea* spp., *Erodium* spp.

DIAGNOSTIC SPECIES

Globally

Information not available.

*Tuzigoot National Monument**Atriplex canescens*, *Muhlenbergia porteri*

VEGETATION DESCRIPTION

Globally

Information is not available.

Tuzigoot National Monument

The *Atriplex canescens*/*Muhlenbergia porteri* association forms an open shrubland composed of several shrub species. *Atriplex canescens* is scattered on the slope from top to bottom, often with *Muhlenbergia porteri* growing underneath. *Eurotia lanata* is most abundant higher on the slope and decreases downslope. At midslope the *Prosopis velutina* is short and shrubby, but at the toe slope it gains stature and is more frequently encountered. *Parthenium incanum* appears in the community on the southeastern exposure at midslope.

OTHER NOTEWORTHY SPECIES None

CONSERVATION RANK G?

RANK JUSTIFICATION Not applicable

COMMENTS

This is a disturbance type that has affinities with previously recognized natural communities, most notably the *Prosopis velutina*/*Muhlenbergia porteri* in New Mexico.

On the Monument, this association abuts mine tailings to the west. To the south, this association merges with the bottomland *Prosopis velutina* associations. On top of the slope, *Eragrostis lehmanniana*-dominated communities border this association along its northern boundary. Northward along the contour, this association meets a representative of the *Prosopis velutina*/*Gutierrezia sarothrae* association. The *Atriplex canescens*—*Muhlenbergia porteri* association gives the area a unique signature on infrared aerial photography.

REFERENCES

Reichenbacher, F.W. 1983. Plant Communities of Arizona. Report to Arizona Natural Heritage Program. Tucson, AZ.